

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 12072 051522Z

45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-13

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 RSR-01 /111 W

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R 051114Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4152

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12072

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB VS

SUBJECT: AFL-CIO DELEGATION AND THE JAILED UNION OFFICIALS

REFS: A. SAIGON 11981 B. SAIGON 11648

1. THE AFL-CIO DELEGATION ARRIVED IN SAIGON AT A TIME WHEN FOUR TRADE UNION OFFICIALS WERE BEING HELD IN JAIL, INCOMMUNICADO AND WITHOUT CHARGES. THIS WAS DISTURBING TO THE DELEGATION AND AFTER DISCUSSING THE PROBLEM WITH TRAN QUOC BUU AND THE CHARGE, THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT IT SHOULD BE A MAJOR SUBJECT FOR THEIR CONVERSATIONS HERE. WHEN THEY MET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, THE DELEGATION MADE THE JAILING OF UNION OFFICIALS THE MAIN POINT.

2. MORRIS PALADINO, AAFIL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PRESENTED THE ISSUE TO THE PM RELATING TO THE LABATT: "BOY* I REALLY PUT IT TO HIM*" HE FURTHER STATED THAT HE TOLD THE PM HOW HOLDING UNION OFFICIALS IN JAIL WITHOUT CHARGE AND INCOMMUNICADO WAS CAUSE FOR GREAT EMBARRASSMENT TO THE AFL-CIO. "WE ARE NOT HERE JUST TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR THE THIEU GOVERNMENT," COMMENTED PALADINO, "WE'RE HERE TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY." THE PM WAS REPORTED AS HAVING DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE JAILED LABOR OFFICIALS CLAIMING THAT IT WAS A POLICE MATTER AND HIS OFFICE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. HOWEVER, HE WOULD INFORM PRESIDENT THIEU OF AFL-CIO

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 12072 051522Z

CONCERN.

3. TRAN QUOC BUU ACCOMPANIED THE DELEGATION TO THE MEETING HE ARRANGED FOR THEM WITH PRESIDENT THIEU. MUCH TO THEIR SURPRISE, PRESIDENT THIEU OPENED THE DISCUSSION WITH THE QUESTION OF THE JAILED UNION OFFICIALS SAYING THAT THE WHEELS OF DEMOCRACY MOVE SLOWLY AND THAT THE SUPREME COURT IS VERY POWERFUL IN VIETNAM; BUT HE WAS ABLE TO REPORT THAT THE FOUR JAILED UNION OFFICIALS WOULD BE PUT ON PUBLIC TRIAL IN A FEW DAYS CHARGED WITH BEING UNDERCOVER AGENTS OF THE COMMUNISTS. THE DELEGATION DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THIEU MEANT ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND THE SUPREME COURT, BUT HE WAS QUITE CLEAR ABOUT THE JAILED UNION OFFICIALS. THIEU OFFERED TO SHOW THE DELEGATION THE DOSSIER ON EACH OF THE ACCUSED AND FURTHER OFFERED THEM A MEMORANDUM STATING THAT THE ACCUSED WOULD BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN A FEW DAYS.

4. THE DELEGATION LEFT THIEU'S OFFICE HAPPY WITH THE THOUGHT THAT THEY HAD ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.
WHITEHOUSE

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